



Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Association

Notes From The President

Neighbors & Friends,

Hopefully everyone's Christmas, New Years and Holidays were enjoyable Mary Kay's and mine certainly were. At the January meeting I look forward to coming back with new energy, new ideas and new SONA friends. To that end we are devoting the meeting to previously unfinished projects and with developing a schedule of activities that meets the needs, desires, and wishes of the neighborhood members. With that in mind please join us and bring a neighbor or community member to the January meeting to help us plan our 2008 activities and work on unfinished and new projects to improve our neighborhood environment.

Our November 2007 meeting was on Home and Family Disaster Preparedness and was well attended. I have a question for those of you that attended, have you developed a family disaster plan or implemented any of the suggestions that were presented by Teri Allen or Howard Hoff?

Here are a few **Safety Tips** that Howard has passed along for your information.

- Test and inspect smoke, heat, and gas detectors.
- Check fire extinguishers. Replace or service as needed.
- Check to be certain nothing flammable is near a source of flame, such as a water heater pilot light, gas range, furnace, etc.
- Practice your family fire-escape plan and review earthquake preparedness.
- Inspect electrical cords for damage. Repair or replace if needed.
- Check the operation of all electrical circuit breakers by turning each off and on. Do the same with ground fault circuit interrupters, usually found in bathroom, kitchen, garage, and outdoor outlets. Replace those not working properly.
- Always be alert for other safety hazards, such as cracked walkways, hazardous materials that aren't properly stored, or unsecured heavy bookcases or other furniture that could topple during an earthquake.

Michael *Note time change for January meeting only.*

AGENDA

SONA GENERAL MEETING

Thursday

January 10, 2008

****Note Time Change****

7:30 p.m.

Social Mixer

8:00 p.m.

Announcements

SJPD

General Meeting

- Follow up regarding area wide parking & traffic calming
- Planning & Land Use Update
- 2008 Schedule of Activities

Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Association meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at the Sherman Oaks Community Center, 1800A Fruitdale Ave. SJ CA 95128

Good Neighbor Corner

There are a number of neighbors to thank this time around. There were those who played secret Santa to neighbors (you know who you are), those neighbors I saw picking out gifts for the giving trees around town, those who cleaned up trash along the roads and those who tried to make somebody else's life a little better over the holiday season. This is my favorite part of the newsletter because I hear all the wonderful things you do but most of the time I'm not allowed to print names. If you have a neighbor you want to honor, let me know...I look forward to hearing from you. *Randi*

Budget Meetings

Where should San Jose be spending money? The City is going into it's next fiscal year and looking at how to provide services to residents while cutting expenses. Just like your family budget, the City's budget is required to spend money in some areas while having some discretion in others. Last year **Mayor Chuck Reed** called together residents from around the city to spend a morning discussing these issues and coming to a consensus. This will happen again on January 19, 2008 at City Hall from 9am-1pm. Registration and coffee begins at 8:30am.

You don't need to understand spread sheets or "finance speech" to participate. You simply need to have an opinion on what the City's priorities should be. Each neighborhood group sends a representative and seating is provided for observers or you can watch it on Cable channel 26. The results of the meeting are collated and taken to the budget meetings with the City Manager and staff. Whether it's road repairs, libraries, police, fire or parks, the city must determine what is most important to residents. How do you want to balance the short term needs of the city with our long term goals?

One of the interesting things about last year's meeting was that residents were very clear that our budget priorities should include long term development goals to bring jobs to the city. The city derives it's tax base from jobs and sales tax and residents wanted to send a strong message that we cannot become a bedroom community for the rest of the bay area.

As a SONA resident, what is important to you? SONA will be sending a representative to this meeting but we'd like to hear from you first. Where do you want the city to concentrate its limited revenues? Are there items in the city budget you are willing to see cut? Attend January's SONA meeting or drop us a line before the meeting.

Notes and News

The **Bascom Community Center and Library** has officially been named. Plans are still moving ahead, but there has been a small set back in the public art component. The building's unique design has limited the artist in some respects and the collaboration between architect and artist has reached a stalemate. While the construction portion of the project will continue to move forward, the public art component will be following at a slower pace. Members of the public art team hope to help resolve this in the next month or so. In the meantime, staff is still negotiating with the owner of the billboard that needs to be moved.

The **San Jose Fire Department** makes numerous calls each year to residences where an elderly or disabled person is behind a locked door. As the first responders, this means they must break in either a window or door to gain access and provide emergency services. This wastes time and leaves your property unsecured if you are transported to the hospital. While many people have a hidden key outside that is known to the family, this doesn't help SJFD when making an emergency call. This can easily be remedied with a system called a KNOX Box that can be ordered through the fire department. The box is paid for, installed outside the door and a key is kept inside the locked box. SJFD had the combination or master key. If they are responding to a call to your home they will not be delayed by trying to find a way in. That short delay can cost you or a loved one minutes of precious time. You can pick up an order form at any SJFD location. Also, this is a good time to update your **Vial of Life**. If there is an emergency at your home, emergency personnel can gather your medical history easily and quickly at a time when you are most likely not going to be thinking clearly.

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SONA's newsletter is published monthly and distributed to almost 1500 residences. It is partially funded by a City of San Jose CAP Grant. All ad copy is due by the 15th of each month. Our all-volunteer group welcomes your participation and comments.

SONA Newsletter Editor: Randi Kinman
SONA Website Administrator: Sonya Paz

Rainy Days

With winter rains finally here, everyone can help keep our storm water systems flowing which can keep our ground water safe and our streets free of dangerous ponding that can cause accidents. We all take the extra time to climb onto the roof and clear out our gutters and downspouts but sometimes forget that the next step should be looking at what happens at street level.

Ideally we are minimizing the amount of water that runs from our property to the street. This allows water to be “stored” temporarily in our yards and slowly released to the water table below. Water that does flow into the streets should be free of pollutants that can affect our water quality.

- ⇒ Make sure your gutters and downspouts are cleared out and operating efficiently. Water build up on your roof can result in long term structural damage. You can keep the downspouts cleared of debris with very inexpensive “caps” that can be purchased from any hardware store. Take the time to walk the perimeter of your home during a hard downpour to make sure all systems are working.
- ⇒ Minimize the run off from your downspouts by diverting the water into bedding areas, lawns or portions of the yard that can “hold” water. You can buy inexpensive extensions that will allow you to move the drain’s exit point away from your house. Make sure that the ground around your home slopes away from the structure. Standing water that is adjacent to your foundation or siding can cause long term damage.
- ⇒ Adding a layer of mulch to beds and around trees will help retain water and as the mulch decays it will “feed” your soil. Those giant piles of leaves you place out on the street will be reduced quickly during the rainy season to a compact layer. By feeding your soil now you can avoid the need for chemical enhancements and cut down on weeding. Instead of throwing away your leaves and buying soil amendments in the spring, save money and use the amendments you can reap from your own yard.
- ⇒ If you have more leaves and clippings than bedding areas, start a small compost pile. It can be as simple as piling material up in a corner of the yard or you can build a container of wood or chicken wire. Add your banana peels, coffee grounds and other vegetable kitchen waste to the pile. Rain reduces the material quickly. Turn it once in awhile to speed up the process and know that next spring you won’t have to haul bags of manure or compost from the garden center to feed your plants.
- ⇒ If a hard freeze damages plants this year, stop and re-think your yard. Can you replace with native species? Can you replace with drought tolerant material? By changing some of your yard you can cut down on the amount of water you need in the summer months.
- ⇒ Make sure there are no chemicals washing into the system from your driveway or yard. Do not apply pesticides or chemicals to lawns just before a rain. Do not let oil or antifreeze wash into the storm system. Keep in mind that just one drop of antifreeze is a sweet attractant to pets and just one drop can destroy an animal’s kidneys. Anything that leaves your yard and enters the groundwater becomes part of your drinking water later on.
- ⇒ Keep your curbside gutters clear. Park cars outside the curb line so water can flow freely down the street. Do not park on the sidewalk. You can park up to 18” from the curb.
- ⇒ If you need to put yard waste out on the street, make sure that it is outside the curbside drainage line. Leave enough space between the curb and your pile to ensure water can flow freely down the street to the drain systems.
- ⇒ If you see debris piled up over the drains on the street, try to clear it out. This will cut down on the traffic and pedestrian hazards created when water backs up. If water can flow freely into the drains it helps keep our streets from being damaged.
- ⇒ If you cannot open a clogged street side drain or if you see an area where water is blocked, immediately call the City of San Jose’s Department of Transportation’s storm clearance group at 277-4373.

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Mark Your Calendar

Sept 29-Jan 26 is the Bodyworks 2 exhibit at the Tech Museum. You can explore the incredible world of the human body, how all the pieces fit together and how the body changes through age, growth or disease. Over 200 real human specimens are preserved through a Plastination process that allows you to view large muscles, tiny capillaries and the human brain. While not for everyone, it is a most unusual show.
www.thetech.org/bodyworld or 294-tech.

Guadalupe River Parks and Gardens does not slow down during the winter months. There are ongoing courses, classes, exhibits and activities for kids and adults all year long. Kids can plant a pizza garden, explore local archeology, learn about tectonics or understand the wonders of the human heart. Adults can meet live raptors on January 12 at the Hunters of the Sky workshop, or learn how to make art out of recycled materials in February. There are docent led tours all year and keep an eye out for Yoga classes for adults and kids. The spring walking series will bring together people who want to get in shape or just meet new friends by walking the many trails. GRPG is one of San Jose's hidden jewels with hundreds of acres of trails, gardens and, of course, the river. You can contact them by visiting their website at www.grpg.org or going to their offices at 438 Coleman Ave., SJ 95110. Phone is 408.298.7657.

For a list of local exhibits and events, try visiting www.artstopolis.com. You'll find something for everyone in the family.

The City of San Jose maintains a comprehensive website with events and activities throughout the year. Whether you are looking for a unique park, festival dates or what's new at the Tech Museum, you can find it all there. Now, thanks to the efforts of many community leaders, you can also find out when meetings are being held around the city. Interested in tree ordinances, traffic calming, parks or budget hearings? Want to know when the airport commission meets? Want to know how to reach elected officials and staff concerning education, transportation or our gang task force? Then visit the City's website at www.sanjose.ca.gov and pick your topic. All departments and contact information are located here.



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Volunteers Needed

SONA is still looking for more volunteers who have a couple hours a month to give towards making our neighborhood a better place in which we live, work and play. One of our needs is for some temporary newsletter people who can fill in while regulars are on vacation or temporarily are unavailable. This only takes about an hour or so a month. We also need volunteers to help with newsletter articles you don't have to be an expert journalist, you just need to be willing to help out.

SONA is also looking for community volunteers who can sit on the Burbank/Del Monte NAC. This is the Strong Neighborhoods group that meets monthly and works with other neighborhoods and city staff to develop projects and priorities.

Each year SONA elects a board of officers. Due to term limits, some of our officers need to rotate off the board. A board member shares responsibility for setting up meetings or locating speakers, and keeping in touch with what's going on in the neighborhood. We all help each other. If interested, contact Michael or Marlene.